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"A Teacher on the Front Line as Faith and Science Clash" -- a story on the front page of *The New York Times* (August 24, 2008) -- [examines](#) [4] the creationism/evolution controversy as it plays out in the classroom of David Campbell, a biology teacher in Orange Park, Florida. The *Times*'s reporter Amy Harmon writes, "in a nation where evangelical Protestantism and other religious traditions stress a literal reading of the biblical description of God's individually creating each species, students often arrive at school fearing that evolution, and perhaps science itself, is hostile to their faith." Campbell's students are a case in point, and "their abiding mistrust in evolution, he feared, jeopardized their belief in the basic power of science to explain the natural world -- and their ability to make sense of it themselves."

In addition to helping his own students, Campbell also helped to improve the treatment of evolution throughout Florida by co-founding the grassroots organization [Florida Citizens for Science](#) [5] [blog](#) [6]) and by serving on the committee that revised Florida's state science standards in 2007. The new standards describe evolution as a "fundamental concept underlying all of biology" -- a far cry from their predecessors, which sedulously avoided even using the e-word. Harmon writes, "Campbell defended his fellow writers against complaints that they had not included alternative explanations for life's diversity, like intelligent design. His attempt at humor came with an edge: 'We also failed to include astrology, alchemy and the concept of the moon being made of green cheese,' he said. 'Because those aren't science, either.'"

As well as explaining the scientific evidence for common descent and natural selection, Campbell

discusses the limits of science, telling his students, "Faith is not based on science ... And science is not based on faith. I don't expect you to 'believe' the scientific explanation of evolution that we're going to talk about over the next few weeks. But I do ... expect you to understand it." The approach seems to be helpful, to judge from a case recounted in the article. One student who earlier refused to answer a test question that asked for two forms of evidence supporting evolutionary change and natural selection, writing, "I refuse to answer ... I don't believe in this," later relented. Grading the student's retest, Campbell found that "the question that asked for evidence of evolutionary change had been answered."

Accompanying the article is a [sidebar](#) [7] discussing the treatment of evolution in state science standards, comparing the ratings assigned by Lawrence S. Lerner in his 2000 study [Good Science, Bad Science](#) [8] with NCSE's assessment, using Lerner's criteria, of the standards currently used. The standards "have improved in many states since 2000 ... [b]ut most states' standards do not explicitly require teachers to explain that humans evolved from earlier life forms." There is also a historical [timeline](#) [9] illustrating "A Fading Resistance to Evolution Education," furnished by NCSE, and, apparently only on the newspaper's website, a version of NCSE's [answers](#) [10] to Jonathan Wells's "Ten questions to ask your biology teacher about evolution". For a more extensive rebuttal of Wells's claims about evolution, see Alan D. Gishlick's ["Icons of Evolution?"](#) [11]

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